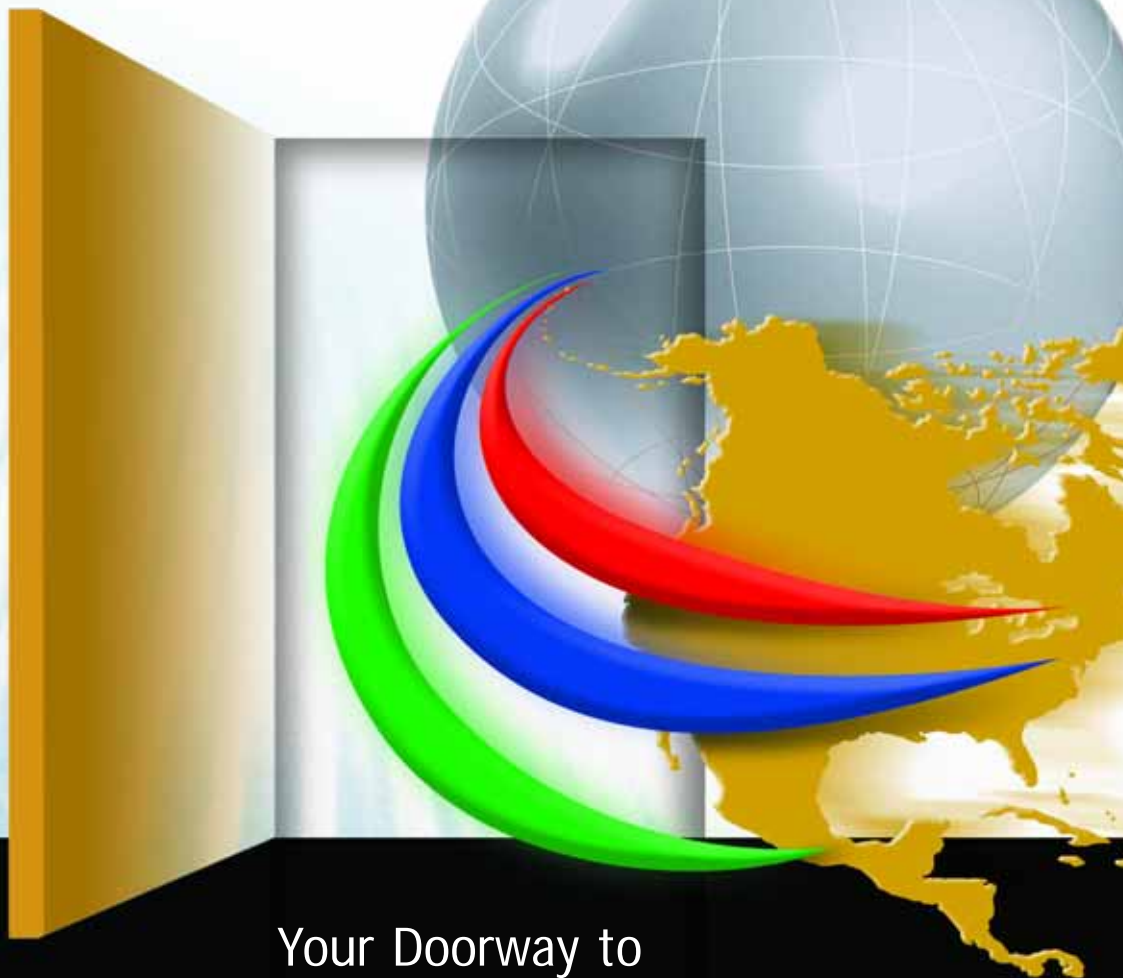




NAFTA Inquiry Points



Your Doorway to
Standards-Related
Measures Information

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Publication Date: February 2005
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The information contained herein is the responsibility respectively of the government of Canada (Canadian information), the government of the United States of America (U.S. information), and the government of the United Mexican States (Mexican information).

This brochure contains references to certain obligations under Chapter 9 of the North American Free Trade Agreement: Standards-Related Measures. For other specific obligations, readers are referred to the text of the Agreement at:
<http://www.nafta-sec-alena.org>

World Trade Organization

Canada, the U.S. and Mexico are also signatories to the World Trade Organization Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO/TBT Agreement). Provisions similar to those stipulated under NAFTA for notification and inquiry point activities exist under the WTO/TBT Agreement (<http://www.wto.org>). Specifically, signatories to the WTO/TBT Agreement are required to give notice when they plan to introduce new or amended technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures. They are also required to establish Enquiry Points, which act as focal points for trade-related technical information between signatory countries. The Standards Council of Canada, the National Centre for Standards and Certification Information and the Dirección General de Normas also operate in this capacity on behalf of their respective countries.

The North American Free Trade Agreement: What is it?

On 1 January 1994, the governments of Canada, the United States, and Mexico implemented the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) thereby forming the world's largest free trade area. The objectives of the Agreement include:

- To eliminate barriers to trade in, and facilitate the cross-border movement of goods and services in the three Parties;
- To promote conditions of fair competition in the free trade area;
- To create effective procedures for the implementation and application of the Agreement, for its joint administration and for the resolution of disputes; and
- To establish a framework for further cooperation in order to expand and enhance the benefits of the Agreement.



Notification and Information

To facilitate the exchange of information between Canada, the United States and Mexico regarding their trade in goods and services, the NAFTA mandates that each Party establish a National Notification Authority (NNA) and a National Inquiry Point (NIP).

What is the difference?

NNAs are responsible for:

- notifying the other Parties of all proposed technical regulations as well as proposed standards and conformity assessment procedures in its territory that deviate from international standards and practices and may have a significant impact on the trade of the other Parties;
- providing documentation in support of the above-mentioned notifications; and
- co-ordinating comments received on proposed technical regulations, standards or conformity assessment procedures (collectively known as standards-related measures).

NIPs are tasked with responding to all reasonable inquiries from the other Parties and providing documentation regarding:

- any standards-related measure proposed, adopted or maintained in its territory at the federal, state or provincial government level;
- any standard or conformity assessment procedure proposed, adopted or maintained by non-governmental standardizing bodies in its territory; and
- membership and participation in international and regional standardizing bodies and conformity assessment systems, and in bilateral and multilateral arrangements regarding standards-related measures, and the provisions of those systems and arrangements.

PARTY	NNA AND NIP
Canada	Standards Council of Canada (SCC)
U.S.	National Centre for Standards and Certification Information (NCSCI)
Mexico	Dirección General de Normas (DGN)



Fulfilling NAFTA's Notification Requirements

The SCC, NCSCI and the DGN each in its role as the government authority responsible for notification activities under NAFTA:

- reviews Federal and Provincial Gazettes (Canada), the *Federal Register* (U.S.), or the *Diario Oficial de la Federación* (Mexico) to identify any new or amended technical regulation, conformity assessment procedures or standards that should be notified;
- prepares notifications of the identified measures and circulates them in the official language(s) of the country to the other NNAs;
- upon request, provides the full texts in support of notifications; and
- handles comments on both proposed domestic and foreign standards-related measures subject to notification. In this capacity, the authority receives comments and transmits them to the appropriate organization for consideration.

How to obtain web-based notification information

- In Canada, the SCC created and operates Export Alert! – a unique, customized, automated e-mail notification service that alerts subscribers when regulations, which affect their specific field of interest, are changing in global markets. The service enables exporters to keep abreast of regulatory changes in global markets before they become laws, as well as provides them with the opportunity to submit comments which are taken into consideration as regulatory changes are finalized. To register, visit <http://www.scc.ca>
- In the U.S., NCSCI also offers a similar service to U.S.-based organizations. Subscribers can register on-line at <http://ts.nist.gov/export-alert>
- In Mexico, the DGN lists notifications received from the other Parties in a bulletin on its web site called Notificanorm-Alert, where users can automatically obtain the notifications they are interested in. Through this system, users can also submit their comments on new or proposed measures. The bulletin and on-line comments feature are available at <http://www.economia.gob.mx/?P=85>

The NAFTA (and WTO TBT Agreement) provides that interested persons be given an opportunity to comment on proposed technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures and that these comments be taken into account before a final rule is adopted. This process can help to promote greater compatibility in the requirements of the respective markets and help prevent unnecessary obstacles to trade.

Responding to Technical Inquiries

In an effort to address clients' growing need for web-based standards-related information, the Standards Council of Canada is making more of its products and services available through its web site. The following information resources enable clients to access the latest standards-related information online:

- *RegWatch* – A unique database of references to voluntary standards cited in Canadian federal regulations.
- *Canadian Standards Database* – A centralized database containing bibliographic information on Canadian standards.
- *Standards Alert!* – A service that sends interested parties automatic e-mail notices when changes are made to Canadian and international standards.

Ask the experts a specific question

As part of an international network of information specialists, officers of the Standards Council of Canada's Information and Research Service are connected to standards information sources from around the world. As such, the Information and Research Service can:

- help identify the standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures needed to enter a particular market;
- point to the authorities that oversee those requirements;
- obtain advance information on new or revised standards; and
- verify the accuracy of standards information from other sources.

Contact SCC by e-mail, telephone, and fax for your standards-related inquiries. Charges may apply for extensive research.

CANADA



To conduct research in-person, in Canada, visit the Technical Document Centre

A key information resource of the Standards Council of Canada, the Technical Document Centre (TDC) has the most comprehensive electronic collection of national, foreign and international standards documents in Canada. The TDC also houses numerous reference materials, including legislative documents, directories, technical and scientific dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks on standardization and conformity assessment, and standards-related periodicals.

The TDC is open to the public by appointment.

The TDC's collection is for reference purposes only. To purchase a standard, visit the StandardsStore.ca. Canadian, foreign and international standards are available in paper, CD-ROM and downloadable versions. For full details on availability and pricing call, e-mail or visit the web site.

1-800-267-8220
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Responding to Technical Inquiries

As the National Inquiry Point for the United States, the National Centre for Standards and Certification Information (NCSCI):

- answers questions on product standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures in U.S. and foreign markets;
- provides information on proposed U.S. and foreign technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures that may affect business;
- provides direction regarding market access issues;
- maintains an extensive standards collection for review and reference; and
- maintains a reference centre on standards and conformity assessment.

NCSCI's information specialists are available to respond to written, telephone, fax, e-mail and walk-in requests. All NCSCI services are offered free of charge.

U.S.A.





Take the hands-on approach to research, in the U.S., visit NCSCI's Information Centre

The largest collection in the United States of standards and standards-related documents, the NCSCI reference collection includes: U.S. industry and national standards, international and foreign national standards; standards-related publications, periodicals and newsletters; and directories, technical and scientific dictionaries, encyclopedias and handbooks.

Further information regarding NCSCI's activities, access to standards-related publications, and sources for purchasing documents can be found at <http://ts.nist.gov/ncsci>

NCSCI is open to visitors by appointment Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. It is located about 25 miles/40 kilometers northwest of Washington, DC, and about five miles from the Shady Grove Metro Station on the Red Line.

National Centre for Standards and Certification Information

National Institute of Standards
and Technology

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E-mail: ncsci@nist.gov

Web site: <http://ts.nist.gov/ncsci>

Responding to Technical Inquiries

Through its four information divisions – *Centro de Información*, *Biblioteca*, *Módulo de Venta de Normas Nacionales*, and *Punto de Contacto* (National Inquiry Point under NAFTA), the Dirección General de Normas provides a general orientation and the latest developments, training programs and information for a variety of clients on the activities relating to national and international systems of standards and conformity assessment procedures.

The Information Centre also provides regularly updated printed materials on topics related to Mexico's standards and conformity assessment systems.

To ensure closer communications with its clients, the Dirección General de Normas, with the assistance of experts from its various branches, offers monthly courses, seminars and workshops.



MEXICO



Interested in performing research, in Mexico, visit the DGN in person and on-line

In the Library of the Information Centre, visitors can consult the extensive collections of Mexican and other national and international standards. Printed copies of Mexican Official Standards (Normas Oficiales Mexicanas or NOMs) and Mexican Voluntary Standards (Normas Mexicanas or NMXs) issued by the Ministry of Economy are available from the DGN's sales division.

As well, interested parties can download the full text of these same standards free of charge from the on-line catalogue accessible through the DGN's Web site at either: www.economia-noms.gob.mx (for mandatory standards) or www.economia-nmx.gob.mx (for voluntary standards). The catalogue also contains complete information on where to order NMXs issued by the National standards-setting bodies.

Dirección General de Normas

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Web page: www.economia.gob.mx/?P=85

Connect to global standards-related information

How to stay linked and informed

Bookmark the web sites of the NAFTA Inquiry Points

- Canada (SCC) – www.scc.ca
- United States (NCSCI) – <http://ts.nist.gov/ncsci>
- Mexico (DGN) – <http://www.economia.gob.mx/?P=85>

Contact the NAFTA Inquiry Points — SCC, NCSCI, DGN — to:

- receive advance notice of regulatory changes that affect the trade in your product(s) (so you won't be caught by surprise);
- provide your comments on the regulations that affect your product(s); and
- access a vast array of domestic and international standards-related information.

Clients of the Inquiry Points include:

- Inquiry Points in other countries
- Domestic and foreign government departments
- Industry Associations
- Importers and Exporters
- Manufacturers and Consumers
- Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- Educational Institutions
- Students

